The Manager Of the B. & A.

By VAUGHAN KESTER

CHAPTER I.

OAKLEY was alone in the bare general offices of the Huckleberry line, as the Buckhorn and Antioch railroad was commonly called by the public, which it betrayed in the matter of meals and connections. He was lolling lazily over his desk with a copy of the local paper before him and the stem of a disreputable cob pipe between his teeth.

The business of the day was done, and the noise and hurry attending its doing had given way to a sudden hush. Other sounds than those that had filled the ear since morning grew out of the stillness. Big drops of rain driven by the wind splashed softly against the unpainted pine door which led into the yards or fell with a gay patter on the corrugated tin roof overhead. No. 7, due at 5:40, had just pulled out with twenty minutes to make up between Antioch and Harrison, the western terminus of the line. The 6 o'clock whistle had blown, and the men from the car shops, a dingy, one story building that joined the general offices on the east, were straggling off home. Across the tracks at the ugly little depot the ticket agent and telegraph operator had locked up and hurried away under one umbrella the moment No. 7 was clear of the platform. From the yards every one was gone but Milton McClintock, the master mechanic, and Dutch Pete, the yard boss. Protected by dripping yellow oilskins, they were busy repairing a wheezy switch engine that had been incontinently backed into a siding and the caboose of a freight.

Oakley was waiting the return of Clarence, the office boy, whom he had sent uptown to the postoffice. Having read the two columns of local and personal gossip arranged under the heading "People You Know," he swept his newspaper into the wastebasket and pushed back his chair. The window nearest his desk overlooked the yards and a long line of shabby day coaches and battered freight cars on one of the sidings. They were there to be rebuilt or repaired. This meant a new lease of life to the shops, which had never proved profitable.

Oakley had been with the Huckleberry two months. The first intimation the office force received that the new man whom they had been expecting for over a week had arrived in Antioch and was prepared to take hold was when he walked into the office and quietly introduced himself to Kerr and Holt, Former general managers had arrived by special after much preliminary wiring. The manner of their going had been less spectacular. They one and all failed, and General Cornish cut short the days of their pride and display.

Naturally the office had been the least bit skeptical concerning Oakley and his capabilities, but within a week a change was patent to every one connected with the road. The trains began to regard their schedules, and the slackness and unthrift in the yards gave place to an ordered prosperity. Without any apparent effort he found work for the shops, a few extra men even were taken on, and there was no hint as yet of half time for the summer months.

He was a broad shouldered, long limbed, energetic young fellow, with frank blue eyes that looked one squarely in the face. Men liked him because he was straightforward, alert and able, with an indefinite personal charm that lifted him out of the ordinary. These were the qualities Cornish had recognized when he put him in control of his interests at Antioch, and Oakley, who enjoyed hard work, had earned his salary several times over and was really doing wonders.

He put down his pipe, which was smoked out, and glanced at the clock. "What's the matter with that boy?" he muttered.

The matter was that Clarence had concluded to take a brief vacation. After leaving the postoffice he skirted a vacant lot and retired behind his father's red barn, where he applied himself diligently to a cigarette.

When the cigarette was finished the urchin bethought him of the purpose of his errand. This so worked upon his fears that he bolted for the office with all the speed of his short legs. As he ran he promised himself emotionally that "the boss" was likely to "skin" him. But whatever his fears he dashed into Oakley's presence panting and in hot haste. "Just two letters for you, Mr. Oakley!" he gasped. "That was all there was!"

He went over to the superintendent and handed him the letters. Oakley observed him critically and with a dry smile. For an instant the boy hung his head sheepishly, then his face brightened.

"It's an awfully wet day; it's just sopping!"

Oakley waived this bit of gratuitous information.

"Did you run all the way?"

"Yep, every step," with the impudent mendacity that comes of long practice.

"It's rather curious you didn't get back sooner."

Clarence looked at the clock.

"Was I gone long? It didn't seem long to me," he added, with a candor he intended should disarm criticism.

"Only a little over half an hour, Clarence. I guess you may as well go home now."

"Good night, Mr. Oakley," with happy alacrity.

"Good night, Clarence."

The door into the yards closed with a bang, and Clarence, gleefully skipping the mud puddles which lay in his path, hurried his small person off through the rain and mist.

Oakley glanced at his letters. One he saw was from General Cornish. It proved to be a brief note, scribbed in pencil on the back of a telegram blank. The general would arrive in Antioch that night on the late train. He wished Oakley to meet him.

The other letter was in an unfamiliar hand. Oakley opened it. Like the first, it was brief and to the point, but he did not at once grasp its meaning. This is what he read:

Dear Sir—I inclose two newspaper clippings which fully explain themselves. Your father is much interested in knowing your whereabouts. I have not furnished him with any definite information on this point, as I have not felt at liberty to do so. However, I was able to tell him I believed you were doing well. Should you desire to write him, I will gladly undertake to see that any communication you may send care of this office will reach him. Very sincerely yours,

EZRA HART.

It was like a bolt from a clear sky. He drew a deep, quick breath. Then he took up the newspaper clippings. One was a florid column and a half account of a fire in the hospital ward of the Massachusetts state prison and dealt particularly with the heroism of Roger Oakley, a life prisoner, in leading a rescue. The other clipping, merely a paragraph, was of more recent date. It announced that Roger Oakley had been pardoned.

Oakley had scarcely thought of his father in years. The man and his concerns—his crime and his tragic atonement—had passed completely out of his life, but now he was free, if he chose, to enter it again. There was such suddenness in the thought that he turned sick on the moment; a great wave of self pity enveloped him, the recollection of his struggles and his shame—the bitter, helpless shame of a child—returned. He felt only resentment toward this man whose crime had blasted his youth, robbing him of every ordinary advantage, and clearly the end was not yet.

True, by degrees, he had grown away from the memory of it all. He had long since freed himself of the fear that his secret might be discovered. With success he had even acquired a certain complacency. Without knowing his history, the good or the bad of it, his world had accepted him for what he was really worth. He was neither cowardly nor selfish. It was not alone the memory of his own hardships that embittered him and turned his heart against his father. His mother's face, with its hunted, fugitive look, rose up before him in protest. He recalled their wanderings in search of some place where their story was not known and where they could begin life anew, their return to Burton, and then her death.

For years it had been like a dream, and now he saw only the slouching figure of the old convict, which seemed to menace him, and remembered only the evil consequent upon his crime.

Next he fell to wondering what sort of a man this Roger Oakley was who had seemed so curiously remote, who had been as a shadow in his way preceding the presence, and suddenly he found his heart softening toward him. It was infinitely pathetic to the young man, with his abundant strength and splendid energy, this imprisonment that had endured for almost a quarter of a century. He fancied his father as broken and friendless, as dazed and confused by his unexpected freedom, with his place in the world forever lost. After all, he could not sit in judgment or avenge.

So far as he knew he had never seen his father but once. First there had been a hot, dusty journey by stage; then he had gone through a massive iron gate and down a narrow passage, where he had trotted by his mother's side, holding fast to her hand.

All this came back in a jerky, disconnected fashion, with wide gaps and lapses he could not fill, but the impression made upon his mind by his father had been lasting and vivid. He still saw him as he was then, with the chalky prison pallor on his haggard face—a clumsily made man of tremendous bone and muscle who had spoken with them through the bars of his cell door while his mother cried softly behind her shawl. The boy had thought of him as a man in a cage.

He wondered who Ezra Hart was, for the name seemed familiar. At length he placed him. He was the lawyer who had defended his father. He was puzzled that Hart knew where he was. He had hoped the little New England village had lost all track of him, but the fact that Hart did know convinced him it would be quite useless to try to keep his whereabouts a secret from his father even if he wished to. Since Hart knew, there must be others also who knew.

He took up the newspaper clippings again. By an odd coincidence they had reached him on the very day the governor of Massachusetts had set apart for his father's release.

(To Be Continued.)

"Mr. Scads, I want your daughter." "What's our business?" "I am a clerk—" "Skidoo!" "For a railroad." "Pardon me, Mr. Graft. Evangeline come down and meet your sweetheart."—New York Herald.

JAPAN STUDIED RAILROADS

One Fruitful Field of Observation Was the United States Senate.

Some of those noiseless-footed, soft-spoken, gimlet-eyed commissions went around the world examining the systems of all the great nations. They studied the state-owned railroads of Germany and the private owned railroads of England. They saw what Hungary had done and what Austria was trying to do. They went over the French method of state control. They studied the lately adopted state system of Switzerland. They weighed one country against another like a man weighing precious stones. They looked down from the gallery of the United States senate and read the names of great railroad companies on the collar of this puppet and that. They saw the strings that led to Wall street and, being pulled, caused this senator and that to dance. They gathered the significance of "the system;" they saw the path beaten by august feet to the stock tickers; they learned how senator after senator owed his place only to the railroad or trust that owned him body and soul. They learned the story of the Louisville & Nashville; of Mr. Depew and the New York Central; of Platt and his methods; of the puppets of the Pennsylvania; of the means by which the western railroads manage state conventions, choose candidates, elect legislatures, and buy city councils. They learned about campaign subscriptions and how political parties are maintained from railroad and trust treasuries. They learned the story of the millions raised by the railroad companies for the political campaign of 1896. They saw how "the system" worked, how it was absorbing one railroad after another, how its investments were like a rolling snowball, certain to become an avalanche. They learned how men really desirous to maintain the democratic form of government were overwhelmed and silenced by a power that owned or controlled newspapers, distorted the news in the eyes of the public, dominated congress, debauched public men, maintained political machines and subtly and secretly steered the national government wheresoever it would. They saw and learned and absorbed all these things and went home; and perhaps in view of all they observed it was not so wonderful that even at the least propitous time the government determined to put an end to private railroad ownership in Japan.—Charles Edward Russell in "Soldiers of the Common Good," Everybody's Magazine for August.

PROGRESS OF ESPERANTO

Eighty Thousand Persons Have Now Mastered the Language.

The London chamber of commerce has put Esperanto among the subjects for examination in its educational department. This international language, successor of the unlamented Volapuk, was introduced to the world by Dr. Zamenhof, a doctor in Warsaw, Poland, in 1887. His pamphlet, "An International Language by Dr. Esperanto," published in that year, lay dormant for some ten years. It is said that 80,000 persons can now read or write Esperanto; and there are some forty journals and magazines and some two hundred societies or "centers" for propagating it. About half of the roots in Esperanto are of Latin origin, twenty-five per cent of English and twenty-five per cent of German. There is no English "q," "w" or "y" in the language. There are no silent letters. The accent is always on the sylable next to the last. At present, Esperanto consists of about 1,000 roots and from 2,000 to 3,000 words. Dr. Zamenhof holds that by the use of some thirty prefixes and suffixes, 900 root words are enough. Its grammar ought to be learned in an hour by anybody who knows one of the Latin languages. There are no irregular verbs (blessed be Esperanto!). The plural ends in "y;" nouns in "o"; adjectives in "a." "Ino" is the feminine ending. For example, 'patro," father; "patrino," mother. Will Esperanto go the way of Volapuk or will it prosper?—"With the Procession," Everybody's Magazine for August.

A Conscientious Patient.

"Medicine won't help you any," the doctor told his patient. "What you need is a complete change of living. Get away to some quiet country place for a month. Go to bed early, eat more roast beef, drink plenty of good, rich milk, and smoke just one cigar a day."

A month later the patient walked into the doctor's office. He looked like a new man, and the doctor told him

"Yes, doctor, your advice certainly did the business. I went to bed early and did all the things you told me. But, say, doctor, that one cigar a day almost killed me at first. It's no joke starting in at my time of life."—"Under the Spreading Chestnut Tree."—Everybody's Magazine for August.

Waggersby—They say the devil used to transform himself into a woman and visit the earth.

Peckham—Gee! I bet I married him the last time he did his transformation stunt.—Punch.

RAILROAD TIME-TABLES.

ILLINOIS CENTRAL.

Corrected May 30, 1906.

South Bound	121	103	121
Lv. Cincinnati	8:20am	6:00pm	.....
Lv. Louisville	12:01pm	9:40pm	7:31am
Lv Owensboro	.....	5:25pm	*9:00am
Lv. Horse Branch	2:28pm	12:08am	11:05am
Lv. Central City	3:30pm	1:08am	12:30pm
Lv. Nortonville	4:08pm	1:40am	1:28pm
Lv. Evansville	12.50pm	4:40pm	8:30am
Lv. Nashville	.....	7:00pm	8:05am
Lv. Hopkinsville	.....	9:45pm	11:20am
Lv. Princeton	4:56pm	2:27am	2:35pm
Ar. Paducah	6:10pm	3:40am	4:15pm
Lv. Paducah	6:15pm	3:45am	4:30pm
Ar. Fulton	7:20pm	4:50am	6:00pm
Ar. Gibbs, Tenn	8:06pm	5:51am	.....
Ar. Rives	8:13pm	6:01am	.....
Ar. Jackson	.....	7:15am	.....
Ar. Memphis	11:10pm	8:30am	.....
Ar. N. Orleans	10 35am	8:15pm	.....

North Bound	102	104	122
Lv. N. Orleans	7:10pm	9:15am	.....
Lv. Memphis	6:45am	8:50pm	.....
Lv. Jackson	8:07am	10:10pm	.....
Lv Rives	.....	11:58pm	.....
Lv. Fulton	10:15am	12:35am	6:00am
Ar. Paducah	11:20am	1:43am	7:40am
Lv. Paducah	11:25am	1:48am	7:50am
Ar. Princeton	12:29pm	3:03am	9:29am
Ar. Hopkinsville	6:15pm	5.26am	.....
Ar. Nashville	9:25pm	8:10am	.....
Ar. Evansville	3:45pm	9:45am	.....
Ar. Nortonville	1.28pm	8.51am	10.35am
Ar. Central City	2:05pm	4:30am	11:30am
Ar. Horse Branch	3.06pm	5:18am	12:56pm
Ar. Owensboro	*4:56pm	6:00am	*4:56pm
Ar. Louisville	5:35pm	7:50am	4:56pm
Ar. Cincinnati	9:15pm	12:00 m	.....

ST. LOUIS DIVISION

North Bound	306	374
Lv. Paducah	12:40pm	4:20pm
Ar. Carbondale	4:25pm	8:40pm
Ar. Chicago	6:30am	6.30am
Ar. St. Louis	8:05pm	7:20am

South Bound	305	375
Lv. St. Louis	7:45am	9:40pm
Lv. Chicago	2:50am	6:20pm
Lv. Carbondale	11:40am	7:05am
Ar. Paducah	3:35pm	11:00am

CAIRO-NASHVILLE LINE.

North Bound.	101-801	135-835
Lv Nashville	8:10am	.....
Lv Hopkinsville	11:20am	6:40 am
Lv Princeton	2:30 pm	7:45 am
Ar Paducah	4:15 pm	9:25 am
Lv Paducah	6:15pm	9:30 am
Ar Cairo	7:45 pm	11:10 am
Ar St. Louis	7:20 am	4:30 pm
Ar Chicago	6 30 am	9:30 pm

South Bound	122	136-836
Lv Chicago	6:20 pm	9:40 am
Lv St. Louis	9:40 pm	1:50 pm
Lv Cairo	6:00 am	5:55pm
Ar Paducah	7:45 am	7:40 pm
Lv Paducah	7:50 am	3:10 pm
Ar Princeton	9:29am	4 45 pm
Ar Hopkinsville	.....	6:10 pm
Ar Nashville	.....	9:25pm

Trains marked thus * run daily except Sunday. All other trains run daily.

Trains 103 and 104 carry through sleepers between Cincinnati, Memphis and New Orleans Trains 101 and 102 sleepers beween Louisville, Memphis and New Orleans. Trains 801 and 802 sleepers between Paducah and St Louis. Train 801 connects at East Cairo with Chicago sleeper.

For further information address J. T. Donavan, agent, city ticket office, or R. N. Prather ticket agent, Union Depot, Paducah, F. W. Harlow, D. P. A., Louisville, Ky., John A. Scott, A. G. P. A., Memphis, Tenn.; S. G. Hatch G. P. A., Chicago, Ill.; W. H. Brill, T. P. A., St. Louis, Mo.